

## Revolting Roses by RobinPlaysTrumpet15

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**Summary:**

Will is alive, and there was no negotiating that fact. But standing at a graveside surrounded by people convinced that he was dead, Mike has a hard time separating what he knows logically, and what he feels.

## Revolting Roses

Mike... Mike knew that Will wasn't dead. He'd heard him, after all. He'd heard him singing that song, the one he loves because Jonathan played it for him that time when their dad was being an asshole. Lucas and Dustin knew it too. All three of them, with the help of El, heard him shouting for his mother. They all heard him!

Will was alive! He was in the Upside Down, and there was some monster after him, but he was alive.

But... but Mike couldn't help feeling... something bad, standing at a graveside, a hole in the ground and a coffin smaller than some of the other ones Mike had seen in his life. Supposedly, something that looked like Will was in there, looking... looking something. Asleep... dead... peaceful... or not.

Dustin said something about telling Will how Jennifer Hayes was crying, and Mike smiled at it. Laughed, even, for a second before his mother shushed them.

But Mike looked over to see Will's dad sitting beside Jonathan, Mrs. Byers on her oldest's other side. She seemed so... distraught. She looked confused and jumpy and suspicious of everything around her...

Mike wished he could tell her Will was alive. He wished he legitimately had proof of that claim. He knew there was proof, and so did Lucas and Dustin but... it wasn't like they had recorded Will talking or something. They hadn't thought of that. What adults would listen to them, anyway? Who would believe them?

But she seemed like she was going to cry any moment, or like "reality" hadn't set in. Jonathan just looked... so distant, like he was doing his best to ignore everything going on around him.

But Will's dad... Lonnie... that man was awful. He had the decency or good sense to look sad, at least. Mike knew better though. Lonnie was an awful person. He hated Will, or he at least acted like it. He tried to change Will's interests, said that it was girly to draw and

Joyce needed to get him different clothes. Said it was a disgrace that Will, a young boy, didn't like baseball or football or soccer or really any other sport, for that matter. He called Will a...

Mike didn't like to think the word. He'd heard that jerk call Will that word several times when they were younger, claimed that Will hanging out with Mike was weird because neither of them really liked sports.

At home, Mike had only heard the word once from his father, but his mother had told him that he shouldn't say it around the kids, so Mike had never heard it again.

But he knew what it meant, and he knew how much Lonnie's presence had always bothered Will. His father made him uncomfortable and unhappy, because Lonnie only ever yelled and told Will that his interests were stupid and useless and that he could never be a real man if he didn't throw away the crayons and pick up a football once in awhile.

And Mike wanted to be angry that he was here. That on the day everyone around them was mourning the loss, this man had the audacity to show up and pretend to care. Distracting himself with being mad at Will's father would be so much easier than dealing with what he actually felt.

Mike watched as "Will"'s coffin was lowered into the ground, and people started walking past the hole in the ground, tossing in yellow and white, long stemmed roses. Mike had one to drop in too.

His throat was tight, a hard lump settled somewhere in his throat, burning him. His eyes were stinging, and he didn't want to focus on that.

Will was alive. He was not dead!

But this was just so... real. Everyone believed Will was dead. The only people who didn't believe that were Mike, Dustin, and Lucas. People were crying and sniffing and saying sweet words of kindness about a boy they hadn't actually known. None of these kids actually talked to Will at school, so what was the point of them being here?

Jennifer Hayes was cute and nice, but she still also wasn't their friend. She didn't talk to them, had probably never said anything to Will except to ask if he could help her with something in art class.

Mike was shuffled into the line of people walking past the coffin. He could feel his lungs seize up, forcing all the air out of them. He tried to regain his breath as carefully, and as controlled as he possibly could, but he obviously wasn't very successful. Lucas turned and looked at him curiously, eyes turning worried when he saw whatever expression was currently playing on Mike's own face. Then his mother was reaching out and gripping his shoulder, rubbing his back soothingly.

Then it was Mike's turn to toss in the flower.

It was revolting. The flower made him scowl. This was dumb. Even if Will was dead and laying there in that coffin, then... what the hell is the point of these stupid flowers?! Will wouldn't know that there were rotting flowers in the dirt above him grave! And even if he did, roses weren't even Will's favorite flower! Will didn't even particularly care for roses at all. They were cliched and all in all, a little boring to look at. Roses were everywhere.

No, Will's favorite flowers were bluebells. They were blue and purple and small, hanging downwards, delicate and pretty. He liked to draw them sometimes. He'd told Mike once that they were fun, because of their shape, and he liked to find a nice shade of blue and purple with his colored pencils.

Unfortunately here in mid November, bluebells were not available, so Mike could forgive them for that, but it still didn't change anything.

He dropped the flower with a little too much force. It fell and hit the top of the coffin, bouncing just slightly amongst the other flowers just like it. Soft petals, long stems, removed thorns, no leaves. It could be pretty. Really, it could be. Just not now, not like this, not for...

Will was still alive.

Will was still alive.

Will. Was still. *Alive!*

\*

Mike didn't breathe easy again until well after he'd first rushed into Will's hospital room and found him lying there, weak, pale, and sick, but alive. It was easy to forget his worry that odd crushing feeling in his chest when he, Lucas, and Dustin were all talking over each other and telling Will what happened while he was gone in nonsensical disorder. Until Will started coughing.

Some of the anxiety crawled back into his heart again as he asked if Will was alright.

It took until close to a week later when Will went home for the first time before Mike felt really, and truly calm.

He spent a lot of time at the Byers house that first month or so after the Upside Down. The four still spent the majority of their time at Mike's house, but when it was just the two of them, they spent a lot of time just sitting around Will's room, doing homework, reading, drawing, whatever. Just being near each other.

Because Will took comfort in Mike's presence as one of the only people who didn't baby him as much as everyone else did.

And Mike liked being able to look over whenever he wanted and reassure himself that Will was still there, still safe, still breathing.

Still *alive*.

Alive.

### **Author's Note:**

Thanks for reading! Please leave a comment letting me know what you thought. Also, if you caught any mistakes within the story, grammar related or otherwise, please let me know so I can go in and make the appropriate adjustments. Thanks!